

" SPRING HILL "
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Joshua Lederberg, President
The Rockefeller University
New York

October 17, 1985

Dear President Lederberg,

Pursuant to previous discussions with Mac McCarty, I have brought with me today a portrait of Doctor O.T. ("Fess") Avery which I would like to present to The Rockefeller University. At Mac's suggestion, I am leaving it with Ms. Mirsky in the library. It was given to me many years ago by Mrs. Roy Avery, the wife of Fess' brother.

The portrait was commissioned by Fess' colleague and friend, Doctor Ernest Stillman, and was painted in 1928. The artist's signature appears in the right lower corner, but I can't make it out. Perhaps there is better identification and information about him in the Rockefeller archives.

I am not qualified to comment on the artistic merits of this work. Its resemblance to Fess is recognizable but was not pleasing to his family who did not choose to display it.

To those of us who knew Fess in his later years, this portrait of the scientist appears cold and stiff compared to the gentle, warm and sensitive man we remember. There are not many people left who could recall how Fess looked in 1928. It would be interesting to invite Michael Heidelberger's comments.

In any event, I believe this portrait belongs at the University, and I hope that a home for it will be found there.

Cordially yours,



Edward C. Curnen, Jr., MD.